

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

THE closing general meeting of the session was held on Monday last, Mr. C. Fowler, V.P., in the chair. Amongst the donations announced were some portions of a work on Wren's Churches, by Mr. Clayton; *Description de la Chapelle Carlingienne, et de la Chapelle Romane, restes du Château de Nimègue*, by Alexander Oltmans; and some Italian works on a new street at Milan, and on the sixteen ancient columns near Lorenzo. Portions of a fine work on *Les Monuments de la Lombardie*, by Frederic Osten, were exhibited.

The foreign secretary read a note in Mr. Oltmans's work, from which it appears that in Amsterdam there is an institution for the promotion of architecture, which was founded in 1842, and has 710 members. The subscription is 4s. 2d. per annum.

Dr. Bromet exhibited a sketch of the Templar's church at Metz; and Mr. C. J. Richardson some drawings executed by two of his pupils at the School of Design.

The chairman, with some appropriate remarks, then presented to Mr. Boutcher, Gwilt's edition of "Chambers," and Hupé's "Essay on Architecture," and to Mr. Nicholl, Milizia's "Lives of the Architects," in accordance with the awards of the council.

Mr. Scoles, honorary secretary, read the following letter addressed to him by Mr. S. Snitke, relating to the architecture on the bas-reliefs from Nimrod, now in the British Museum.

"The object of this brief note is merely to call the attention of the Institute to the very singular architecture of the bas-reliefs just received by us from Nimrod.

They have so recently been subjected to minute inspection, that it would be unreasonable to expect philologists to have yet arrived at any certain conclusion in respect to their age; but the inscriptions are numerous and in excellent preservation, and there are learned men, capable of decyphering these strange chisellings, who are deeply engaged in tearing open the veil of mystery in which they are now enshrouded: we shall, therefore, soon be better acquainted with these marbles than we at present are. Of the conjectures that I have hitherto heard, some send back their date to an extremely remote antiquity, but the least sanguine archaeologists incline to about six or seven hundred years B.C.

Here then we have, of almost the Homeric age, a lofty castle, with fortified turrets; a gateway, having a circular head; circular-headed windows on an upper story; crenelated battlements; overhanging parapets with embrasures; a well-defined chevron ornament forming the archivol of the entrance gateway; masonry of perfect workmanship equal to that of the best period of Greek art.

The time is not far distant when the best informed antiquaries doubted the existence of any arch older than one hundred years B.C.; and if at that time an Eastern traveller had informed us on his return that he had himself witnessed these strange anomalies, his tale would have been certainly held by all to be an oriental fiction, utterly unworthy of credit or regard.

This is an instructive lesson, teaching the best of us to be diffident and cautious.

Since the Elgin marbles were brought to England, no similar arrival has occurred so calculated to excite the interest of artists and archaeologists as these Assyrio-Babylonian remains, and it is most gratifying to reflect, that on this occasion we have not allowed our continental rivals to prevent England from enjoying the fruits of English enterprise."

The foreign secretary said, nothing was more difficult than determining with accuracy the age of a monument from the surface only: he was glad to find that able men were investigating the inscriptions on the bas-reliefs, as these would probably aid the inquiry. Even the evidence offered by these inscriptions, however, must be received with caution, as they might not be of the same date as the stones. His opinion was, that the work was not known earlier than one or two centuries before Christ: he could not believe, that if such a development of science, such an advantageous system of construction, had been known, that the Greeks would have allowed it to remain asleep. There were many buildings of the Roman period in

Egypt, and he thought it quite possible that the pyramid wherein it was said that an arch had been found, was of that date.

Mr. Scoles said that the soffit of the arch discovered by Sir Gardner Wilkinson was plastered, and that on the plaster was the name of Sesostris.

Mr. S. Angell, V.P., read a well-penned memoir of George Dance, the architect of Newgate, the Mansion House, &c., which was illustrated by a number of his original drawings from the Sans collection.

The chairman concurred in the opinion that had been expressed of Dance; he thought no one could look at Newgate or St. Luke's without admitting his genius. The latter, although flat and poor in a drawing, was effective in execution. He then reminded the meeting that it was the closing meeting of the session. Usually the chair had been filled by the president, who took the occasion to address to them remarks always instructive. He would not venture to emulate his lordship, but there was one suggestion often made by the president which he thought it was his duty to re-urge. It was that each should, during the recess, put together some facts or observations, to be laid before the members in the ensuing session; it was only thus that interest could be given to the meetings. Although the contributions might be small individually, collectively they would be large and important. He afterwards alluded feelingly to the loss of Mr. Papworth, and adjourned the meeting to November next.

A NEW DESIGN FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE LOUVRE.

We have already alluded to certain projects for the reconstruction of the Royal Library at Paris, to examine which, a commission of inquiry was lately appointed by the Prefect of the Seine. This commission has given in its report in favour of the scheme for appropriating the ground situate between the Louvre and the Carrousel. The decision, in the words of a French contemporary, is intimately united with the question of the completion of the Louvre, so often broached, so that great interest is given to the publication of a scheme in which that object is included. The author, M. Brunet de Baines, architect, instead of endeavouring to unite the Louvre and the Tuileries,—an attempt which, in consequence of the inclination of the axes of the buildings being different, has not yet appeared to present any probable success, has obviated the difficulty, and devised an ingenious combination of the buildings. Preserving a direct communication (Rue des Tuileries) between the Rue de Richelieu and the Pont des Saints-Pères, thus intersecting this arrangement transversely, he proposes, upon the Place du Palais Royal, an extension of the Louvre, which would exceed in area, the space occupied by the present building. This addition would comprise the Royal Library and rooms required for the Museum, and with its principal front in the Rue des Tuileries, would have another opposite the Palais Royal, the direction of the line of the front of the Tuileries, in the Rue de Rivoli, being continued. By this arrangement, a site for the Opera would have to be found elsewhere; and it is argued, that a building of such a nature in the immediate neighbourhood of the Library and Museum, would expose the national treasures to all the chances of destruction by fire. The site near the Rue des Bons-Enfants is, therefore, filled with a *château d'eau*, as likely to be of greater service in case of a disaster. Further, the architect proposes to arrange part of the square of the Tuileries in semi-circular form. The centre of the semi-circle being in the Rue des Tuileries, and the arch of the Carrousel forming the summit, buildings of one story are added on each side, to the original edifice, at the springing of the curve. These additions are required for museums, and for the study of art and history, and all sort of dimness! Since the time of Wilkie's "Blind Fiddler," a flow of rural scenes has been added thereto, worked out with painful accuracy into the minutest detail; still, some of their approach, after all, near reality, and pictures of J. Philip, J. Middleton, W. P. Frith, are full of life and truth. But there is not one historical picture in the hall of Trafalgar-place, not excepting even those three Joan d'Arca,

3. Establishing a grand road between the two banks of the river, at the most frequented point, and doing away with the wickets, which are so inconvenient for communication.

4. An area of monumental character in front of the Tuileries, and providing those appurtenances which are wanting in the building.

5. Complete isolation of the library, of the gallery of pictures, and of the palace, by means of the squares and quays surrounding those buildings; immediate succour in case of fire, and consequent security for those precious deposits, for the preservation of which, too many precautions cannot be taken.

It is further argued in favour of this scheme, that sufficient space would thus be provided for any probable extension of the collection, and that removing the library to the site proposed, and the opera to the present site of the library, would be a far more convenient disposition, as well as one more likely to ensure the safety of the buildings themselves, and those surrounding each of them.

THE LATE MR. ALLEN.
DISTRICT SURVEYOR.

We have to record this week the death of another architect, Mr. George Allen, who died on Monday last, the 24th June, at his house in, Tooley-street, Southwark, after a short illness of about ten days. His decease in the prime of life, may be partly attributed to that zeal and energy for which he was distinguished in his early career, in the prosecution of any object to which he gave the attention of his mind, and which caused him to devote himself so unweariedly to the arduous duties of an extensive and increasing practice, that a comparatively slight indisposition led to a brain fever, terminating in typhus.

Mr. Allen was a pupil in Mr. James Elmes's office, and in 1820, obtained the silver medal at the Royal Academy, for a drawing of the portico and front of the College of Surgeons in Lincoln's-inn-fields, which had been erected a few years previously by Mr. Dance, of whom a memoir was read by Mr. Angell at the Royal Institute of British Architects, on Monday last, as elsewhere mentioned. A few years afterwards the sudden death of Mr. Varnham, an architect of extensive practice in Southwark, with whom Mr. Allen was about to enter into partnership, was the cause of his succeeding to that gentleman's business, and he was shortly afterwards engaged in conjunction with Mr. Savage and others for Mr. Pein, in making surveys and reports, and in giving evidence on the then recent failure of the foundations of the Custom House. This occasion called forth the exhibition of powers for which he was afterwards distinguished, namely, that of great fitness and self-possession under a cross-examination of counsel, who are not always the most courteous to a witness on the opposing side, and of considerable talent in the composition of reports, memorials, and business correspondence.

In 1827 and 1828 he gave his attention to the contemplated improvements in the approaches consequent on the building of new London Bridge. He memorialized the city authorities, and had models, drawings, and engraved views made, at an expense of above 300*l.*, in illustration of his designs for forming an approach to the new bridge from Tooley-street, particularly with reference to throwing open the east end of the church of St. Saviour's, Southwark; and likewise for forming a direct line from the bridge to the Bank, with a cross street to the Monument, and for converting the site of the northern abutment of the old bridge into an open dock for steam-vessels. Mr. Allen had the satisfaction of seeing these and many other of his suggestions adopted; but in reply to his memorial to the city authorities in 1830, to take his claims into consideration, he was informed that there was no fund available for such a purpose. These proceedings, however, brought him into notice in the borough, and for some years past he had been extensively employed in valuations, building of warehouses, and other works, arising from the improvements and alterations made in that neighbourhood; and after one of the great fires so prevalent in that district, he was employed to restore the church of St. Olave, in Tooley-street.